

01020

c. 1963/10/10

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

October 10, 1963

RECEIVED BY 614 DATE 1/22/87

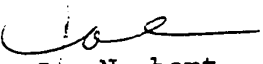
RECEIVED BY 614 DATE 1/22/87

M - Mr. Sullivan

Bill:

The White House has asked us for a report on physical security arrangements at the Embassy in Saigon. This draft would be vastly helped by some personal observations from someone like yourself who has just been on the scene. What, for example, do they do to protect Tri Quang? Any comments you could add to it would be gratefully received.

We have to get this over this afternoon so I would appreciate your calling me as soon as possible.


Joe Neubert

Attachment:

Draft

SECRET
EYES ONLY

DRAFT: TFConlon - FE
JPMcDonnell - WLG
PFCassady - SY

SUBJECT: Physical Security of the American Embassy in Saigon

Recent reports from Saigon have indicated the possibility that a mob may attempt to enter the American Embassy Chancery and assassinate key U.S. officials, including Ambassador Lodge. Aspects of the physical security problems involved in protecting the Embassy Chancery are:

1) Layout of Embassy - A floor plan of the Embassy's five floors is attached as Tab "A." On the ground floor there are only two regular entrances, both of which are protected by steel gates or doors. In addition, the main entrance, on Ham Nghi Boulevard, has a one-foot thick wall of reinforced concrete protecting the desk of the Marine Guard on duty. From this position the Marine Guard could undertake a limited defense of the main entrance. Windows on the ground, mezzanine, and first floors are grilled. However, the Embassy is completely open on the courtyard side, (i.e. comparatively easy of access by ladder or rope on the ground, mezzanine, or first floors from an adjoining, two-story building).

2) Authorized Security Procedures

SECRET
EYES ONLY
~~CLASSIFIED~~

There are 18 Marines assigned to security guard duties in Saigon; 2 are normally on duty at the Embassy. The Embassy has an action team for the internal defense of the Chancery, headed by the Ambassador (or the senior Embassy officer present in his absence) with "floor wardens" for each of the five floors plus mezzanine.

If it appeared likely that a mob was forming ^{off duty} Marine Guards (who live about 2 miles from the Chancery) would be ordered to duty stations. Doors would be secured and strict entrance exits controls instituted.

~~In~~ The Embassy plans provide for the use of tear gas in the Chancery lobby to discourage mob entry. Tear gas would also be used if entry was to be attempted through the Chancery courtyard.

In addition to tear gas and masks there are .45 calibre revolvers (with ammunition) at the Chancery. These weapons would normally be issued to previously designated Embassy officers, by authority of the Ambassador (or senior Embassy officer present) when the behavior of a mob indicated imminent danger to the lives of American personnel, for the defense of life and not property.

All 18 Marine ~~Guard~~ Guards in Saigon are also armed and

SECRET/EYES ONLY

SECRET/EYES ONLY

- 3 -

are normally authorized to use their weapons for the same purpose.

3) Ambassador Lodge's Plans

Ambassador Lodge has reported (Saigon's 676) that he intends to close the entrance gates to the building if a threatening crowd appears to be gathering. He plans to use tear gas to discourage the crowd from breaking down the gates of the Embassy and to discourage any persons seeking to enter the Embassy from the open side facing the residence of Mr. N. Y. Choi, a Chinese merchant. (Chinese residence mentioned in Saigon's 676.) In addition if ladders or catwalks are used to attempt entry from this side of the Chancery, Embassy and/or Marine personnel would attempt to throw the ladders off the guard rail along the corridor on the open side. He would immediately protest to the GVN, by telephone or through MACV, but he plans no shooting.

4) Our Judgment of the Security of the Embassy Chancery

It is our considered view that the Chancery is indefensible and wide open to determined attack in circumstances where we cannot count on the protection normally accorded by local police and security forces. We doubt that the use of tear gas against a crowd milling around in the street outside the Chancery would be helpful and could well incite the crowd, as was the case in the recent sacking of the British Embassy in Djakarta. Tear gasé used

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

~~SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

inside the building or in the courtyard would be far more likely to be effective.

REPRODUCED FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MANUSCRIPT DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

~~SECRET/EYES ONLY~~